



Congressman Tom Udall



It is our responsibility to ensure that the policies we pursue are consistent with the values we cherish. The Administration's 2006 budget fails in every respect. It is fiscally reckless, adding trillions to the deficit over the next 10 years. It is morally irresponsible, slashing funding for key homeland security, veterans benefits, health care, and education programs. I am fighting to restore fiscal responsibility and to uphold the key values that are the foundation of a strong and secure middle class: national security, prosperity, community, fairness, accountability and opportunity.

The budget only increases the Homeland Security Department budget by 1.2 percent, when fee related items are excluded. The budget requests \$34.2 billion in discretionary funding for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs in FY 2006 – which represents an increase of \$2.2 billion or 7 percent over this year's level. However, if you subtract out all of the fee-related items in the budget, the increase is only 1.2 percent – less than the expected rate of inflation of 2.3 percent.

Net cut in funding for first responders. Police departments nationwide do not have the protective gear to safely secure a site after the detonation of a weapon of mass destruction and fire departments have only enough radios for half the firefighters on a shift. And yet the budget includes a net cut in first responder funding within the Department of Homeland Security of \$302 million, or 7 percent. This net cut is the result of slashing first responder formula-based grants by \$480 million, or 32 percent, and slashing the separate Firefighter Grant program by \$215 million, or 30 percent – somewhat offset by an increase in the first responder urban-areas grant program.

Slashes aid to state and local law enforcement. The budget slashes aid to state and local law enforcement in the Justice Department, including the Justice Assistance Grant program and the COPS program. President Bush proposes completely eliminating the newly-created \$626 million Justice Assistance Grant program (which consolidated the Byrne Grant program with the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant). In addition, the Bush budget proposes slashing the COPS program by \$477 million or by 96 percent.

Breaks the promise in the 9/11 Reform bill to add 2,000 border patrol agents in 2006. The budget breaks the promise of putting an additional 2,000 border patrol agents on the job in 2006, as promised in the 9/11 Reform bill that was enacted by Congress only two months ago. The budget funds only 210 new Border Patrol agents – nearly 1,800 below the number promised in the 9/11 Reform bill.

Breaks the promise in the 9/11 Reform bill to add 8,000 detention beds in 2006. The Administration's budget also breaks the promise of increasing the number of detention beds available to the Department of Homeland Security by 8,000 in 2006, as promised in the 9/11 Reform bill that was enacted by Congress only two months ago. The budget funds only 1,920 new beds – over 6,000 beds short of the level promised in the 9/11 Reform bill.

Creates an infrastructure protection grant program, with no guaranteed funding for ports, railroads, or any other infrastructure. The budget eliminates the \$150 million port security grant program, creating instead an infrastructure protection grant program, which supposedly will provide grants to help ports, railroads, public transit authorities, and other infrastructure implement security enhancements. This infrastructure program is inadequately budgeted for only \$600 million. At the moment, there are no details on how such funding will be distributed and to whom. As Kurt Nagle, president of the American Association of Port Authorities, has pointed out, "What the Administration's recommendation would do is to take a grant program that helps fund projects

that defend our borders and has clearly-defined costs, and roll it into a nebulous new program that pits border security needs against domestic security programs.” The funding shortfall estimates for the protection of our ports, our railroads, our public transit systems, and other infrastructure far exceed the \$600 million allotted – and will lead to many important security needs continuing to go unmet.

Fees paid by airlines passengers represent most of the increase in the President’s homeland security budget. The \$2.2 billion increase in funding for the Department of Homeland Security in FY 2006 includes \$1.5 billion in new revenues from higher aviation security fees paid by airline passengers. Under the President’s budget, fees for a one-way flight would jump by \$3 to \$5.50 or to \$8 for a one-way flight that has more than one stop. The higher fees would mean that airline passengers would be paying for about 90 percent of the cost of the Federal Government’s aviation security program.

Provides no increase for air cargo security. The budget provides no increases for TSA air cargo security – even though cargo still travels on passenger planes without being screened. The budget also provides \$205 million less for the installation of explosive detection systems at airports than was called for in the 9/11 Reforms bill enacted two months ago.

Eliminates funding for Metropolitan Medical Response System. The budget eliminates funding for the \$30 million Metropolitan Medical Response System. This DHS program helps local first responders prepare for radiological and other terrorist attacks.

Provides no dedicated funding for interoperable communications grants. Although interoperable communications systems remain a critical need for the first responder community, the budget requests zero funding for this effort. In addition, the Science and Technology Directorate will no longer receive funding from other federal agencies – a cut of \$11 million – for operations of Project SAFECOM, which coordinates all federal interoperable communications efforts.